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to read "by a bull" instead of "as a bull" (cf. Ball's Introduction to the Variorum Apocrypha). Might not a better reading have been obtained, too, in 1 Macc. ii. 57, by remembering that "חֲסִדִּי" (especially in the books of the Maccabees), would mean pious acts rather than mercy? It is hard to understand how "David for being merciful inherited the throne." The writer, however, might well have cited David's piety as the cause of his preferment. Mercy was hardly a characteristic of the Biblical David, however much his virtues were idealized.

In the preceding comments, undue prominence has perhaps been given to passages in which I venture to differ from the conclusions arrived at by the compilers of the version under review. But these comments must not be taken to imply that I do not fully appreciate the magnitude of the service the Revisers have rendered. The Revisers might well address captious critics in the words prefaced by the grandson of Jesus the son of Sirach to the Greek translation of his father's wisdom:—"Ye are intreated therefore to read with favour and attention, and to pardon us, if in any parts of what we have laboured to interpret, we may seem to fail in some of the phrases." But the authors of this translation have no need to plead for mercy. The most rigid and candid justice must assign to parts of their work a very high place, and to all of their work an honourable and respectable place, among the great translations of the present century.

I. ABRAHAMS.

THE SIFRE ZUTA.

ספרי זוטא. *Sifré Suta, d. i. eig. Sifré Numeri (in 2. Recension) zum ersten Male nach dem handschriftlichen Midrasch ha-gadol, Jalkut Simeoni u. a., gesammelt und mit Anmerkungen versehen, nebst einer ausführlichen Einleitung herausgegeben von Dr. B. KÖNIGSBERGER. (1. Lieferung, Frankfurt a. M. Kauffmann, 1894. 24 Blätter, 8vo.)*

In addition to the Sifre on the Book of Numbers, there was another Tannaite Midrash, several fragments of which are preserved in the *Jalkut Shimeoni*. With these and other fragments as a basis to work on, the late Nehemiah Brüll contributed to the Jubilee Volume, published on the occasion of Graetz's seventieth birthday, a descriptive sketch of the lost Midrash termed the "Minor Sifre" (**ספרי זוטא**). He endeavoured to demonstrate that that Midrash did not belong to a late period, as even Weiss's *History of Tradition* assumes, but that

it contains indisputably genuine antique traditions, and was therefore to be regarded as an important source for ancient Halacha. Soon after the appearance of Brüll's essay, Dr. Hoffman issued, in the form of an appendix to the *Report of the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary* for 1886-7, an excellent introduction to the Halachic Midrashim, in which the Minor Sifre is thoroughly discussed, and Brüll's sketch is completed and occasionally corrected. Hoffman establishes the position that the Sifre Zuta emanated from R. Akiba's school, while the ordinary Sifre on Numbers exhibits the peculiarities of the Midrashim belonging to the school of R. Ishmael. About the same time Dr. Israel Levy called attention, in his important contribution, "A Word on the Mechilta of R. Simeon" (*Jahresbericht of the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary*, 1889), to the fact that the major portion of the Sifre Zuta is to be found in the Miscellany known as Midrash Haggadol. This Midrash, the promised publication of which, by Mr. Schechter, will, it is hoped, not be too long delayed, excerpted the lost Tannaite Midrashim to the Books of Exodus and Numbers. It thus affords us special means for completing and confirming the fragments of the Sifre Zuta to be collected from the *Jalkut Shimeoni*. The realization of N. Brüll's wish—expressed at the close of his weighty essay—that a critical edition of the fragments of the Sifre Zuta might be prepared, was rendered feasible by the discovery of the Midrash Haggadol. Dr. Königsberger has now resolved to make this wish a reality, and enrich Midrashic literature with a complete and critical edition of the extant Elements of the Sifre. And worthy of a cordial welcome is the first instalment of what promises to be a very important work. In *The Sources of the Halacha*, part I, Berlin, 1890, Dr. Königsberger already proved that he is quite at home in the region of Halachic Midrash, and that his acquaintance with the Midrash Haggadol (MS. in the Berlin Royal Library) is of a close and intimate character. He concludes that essay with a discussion of the Sifre Zuta, and mostly confirms Dr. Hoffman's results. He has now, with the assistance of the Berlin Zunz-Stiftung, fortunately been able to publish the first part of his edition, which we trust will be followed by its successors at short intervals. It is impossible, with the materials before us, adequately to gauge the editor's aims and tendencies, as the elaborate Introduction, which will unfold the principles on which the edition of the text has been formed, will not appear till the close of the entire publication. But even the simple comprehension of the notes beneath the text is made more difficult than it need be, by the author's excessive use of abbreviations in giving his references to the sources and other writings. These abbreviations prove stumbling-blocks even to the scholar, and their elucidation should

have accompanied the first part. It took me some time, I confess, before I could make out the sense of *ובמה"ח* in the second and other notes. The reference is, of course, to *מדרש החפ"ן*, a Miscellany similar in character to the Midrash Haggadol, which, however, is by no means so well known that it should not, at least the first time, have been cited in unabbreviated form. Dr. Königsberger's notes are, besides, full of other abbreviations which must retard the progress of ordinary readers who are not thoroughly familiar with the literature of the subject. The editor of a *new* text ought surely to take this class as well as the specialists into account. On the other hand, the Rabbinical Hebrew in which these notes are written is fairly easy to follow. If these innumerable abbreviations, in the use of which the writer has copied earlier halachic writers, effect a saving of space, economy has not been studied in the number and bulk of the notes. It would be desirable in future parts rigidly to confine the comments to the citation of parallel passages, and the establishment of a correct text and its elucidation. The attention devoted to modern authors and commentaries on the Midrash is not pertinent to the main purpose which the editor should keep in view; viz. to furnish a good text of the Sifre Zuta and facilitate its critical study. Any other observations would find a more suitable place in the Introduction. I am afraid that Dr. Königsberger's want of self-restraint hampers the progress of his edition. Unnecessary notes swell the bulk and materially increase the cost of publication. In the part before us, which consists of 48 pages, a very small portion (1 a-4 b) is on the first four chapters of Numbers, while the larger part (4 b-24 b) contains the Midrash on chapters 5 and 6. If the annotation in the rest of the edition should be on the same scale, the entire text of the "Small Sifre" will attain the dignity of a volume of brobdignagian size.

In regard to the text, we are nowhere explicitly told that the Midrash Haggadol is the source from which it is taken. That fact can only be gathered from the citations of parallel passages in the notes¹. The Introduction will probably elucidate this important detail. Mr. Schechter's coming edition of the Midrash Haggadol will serve to check, complete, and correct Dr. Königsberger's text, which seems to be exclusively based upon the Berlin Manuscript. As, however, a number of years must elapse before the English savant's edition will reach "Numbers," we owe a debt to Dr. Königsberger for the early opportunity he affords us of reconstructing the "Sifre Zuta" from the Midrash Haggadol. I have, however, considerable doubts whether

¹ Page 3 b, note 41, *הביא שאלה זו (= במדרש הגרול)*. The text then in this passage is taken from another source, perhaps the *מדרש החפ"ן*?

various parts of the text really belong to the Midrash Zuta. Thus, on page 3 a, two passages are introduced with the word דתניא, which the editor himself admits come from the Baraitha "On the Tabernacle," מלאכת המשכן; these ought not to appear in the text of the Sifre Zuta. The word דתניא, which the Midrash Haggadol uses to indicate that he is quoting a Baraitha, is enclosed in brackets. But the brackets do not change the character of the quotations, which, as derived from another source, have no right to a place in the text.

The narrative (on page 19 b) of the Nazirite vow of Queen Helene of Adiabene is to be found in the Mishna Nazir, III, 6 (Talmud Babli, 19 b), whence the Midrash Haggadol might well have taken it. How can Dr. Königsberger tell that it belongs originally to the Midrash Zuta? One of the two passages beginning with דתניא, to which reference has already been made (see Jellinek, *Beth Hammidrash*, IV, 152), closes with the phrase, מופנה להקיש לדון ממנו נורה שוה. This rule belongs, as Dr. Hoffman has already pointed out (*Zur Einleitung*, p. 6, note 2), to R. Ishmael's school; a circumstance which should have warned our editor against including this passage in the Sifre Zuta, a Midrash of Akiba's school. Very briefly too, I would like to point out that in the Midrash on the first Section of Numbers in this edition, occurs the phrase . . . מניר ש. . . מלמד ש. . . is also found in this chapter (see JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, IV, p. 422), and the two promiscuously in later chapters (12 b, line 7; 15 b, line 6; 16 a, line 2; 18 b, line 15; 20 b, line 6; 22 b, line 8). It would be rash to conclude hence that the Sifre Zuta is of a mixed character, as we are not in a position to gauge the extent to which these phrases are used in the original work from which the Midrash Haggadol excerpted.

As far as can be judged from the first instalment, the text has been very carefully edited, and occasionally also corrected. The sentences are separated by punctuations, and scriptural verses are indicated by a widely-spaced type. The editor's unfortunate omission of Biblical references renders the task of verification somewhat tedious. The insertion in the margin of chapter and verse would be an excellent feature in future parts. Some errata noticed by me are here corrected: page 2 b, line 8, read לבית instead of בית; pages 2 a and 2 b, the heading ב should be omitted, as there is no Midrash on Chapter II; page 2 a, line 8, read ואינו instead of ואינה; the heading on page 4 a should be ד instead of ג; page 13 b, line 12, read והשביעו instead of והשביעה.

Note 28 is inaccurate, the text to which it refers is as follows: והיו לי חלויים מניר שקדושתן קיימת לעולם וזה אחד משלשה עשר דבר שנאמר בהן לי והן קיימין לעולם. On this the editor remarks: "The

thirteen passages where the word לִי occurs are collected in Sifre on Numbers xi. 16." The Sifre (§ 42, Friedmann's edition, 25 b) enumerates ten such passages. The correct reference would have been to Leviticus Rabba, ch. 2, § 2, where thirteen passages are indeed gathered; so also Tanchuma בְּהַעֲלֹתָךְ, ed. Buber, p. 20; Midrash Samuel, ch. 19, which fathers the saying on the Agadist Levi. I cannot comprehend why Dr. Königsberger in the same note adds מוֹכַח מִכֵּאֵן שֶׁלְּבַעַל מִדְּרַשׁ הַגְּדוֹל הָיָה נוֹדֵעַ גַּם הַסְפְּרִי. Where was the need of proof that the compiler of Midrash Haggadol knew the Sifre, a position which the editor himself has already sufficiently established in his *Quellen der Halacha*, p. 115, where he states that the Midrash Haggadol borrows largely from the Sifre¹. Besides, he cannot use a passage incorporated in the Sifre *Zuta* as an argument that the compiler of the Midrash Haggadol had knowledge of the Sifre. It is hardly necessary to state that Dr. Königsberger's notes contain many invaluable observations and references. And still it is to be hoped that in the next parts these will decrease in volume, and thus the intrinsic value of the edition be enhanced. On account of the extreme importance of the Sifre for the investigation both of the Tannaite Midrash and Halacha, and of the sources of later works which have copiously borrowed from it, e. g. Bamidbar Rabba and Maimonides' Mishne Torah, Dr. Königsberger's edition should be most welcome. The industry, devotion, and intimate knowledge exhibited in this undertaking merit the approval and support of all friends of Jewish learning. May the editor's efforts to reconstruct out of existing fragments the literary memorials of the past be crowned with perfect success.

W. BACHER.

ARAMAIC PROVERBS.

Aramäische Sprichwörter und Volkssprüche von Dr. MOSES LEWIN.
(Frankfurt a. M. Kauffmann, 1895.)

DR. LEWIN has succeeded in writing a very readable and lucid essay, and has compressed an extraordinary amount of information into a small compass. His work is based on a clearly conceived plan. He restricts his attention to those proverbs found in the Talmud Babli which are in the pure Aramaic dialect. The language of these popular sayings is an eastern form of Mandaic, and was spoken in the high-

¹ Hoffman (*Hildesheimer Jubelschrift*, Berlin, 1890, page 85), however, assumes that the compiler did not know the Sifre on Numbers.